

Animal Care Services Policies & Directives

Division: Shelter

Effective Date: 10/01/2009

Subject: **Rescue Policy**

Revised: 8-18-09

POLICY

- Animal Care Services (ACS) is committed to protecting animals and people and our top priority is to provide for the long-term well-being of the animal while still maintaining a safe community.
- ACS will partner with ALL qualified Rescuers. We will support and build our rescue network, both local and national, in order to achieve NO KILL status.
- ACS and Alamo Area Partners for Animal Welfare (AAPAW – www.AAPAW.org) will work together to develop a screening process and vetting procedure for all rescue organizations requesting to partner with ACS. AAPAW will assist ACS in a site visit to help determine how many animals a Rescue organization can handle and maintain. AAPAW will also help to continue to monitor each Rescue Organization to ensure ACS quality standards. ACS understands that not every Rescuer will wish to participate with AAPAW and ACS will screen those Rescuers ourselves. It is expected that there may be rare times when an AAPAW approved Rescuer is rejected by the ACS Rescue Coordinator for cause. This decision is appealable to the ACS Director.
- This Rescue policy is an effort to save animals by treating all Rescuers fairly and respectfully, and by letting them know they are our honored and valued partners. We believe in giving and receiving open communication and we dedicate all of our energy to doing the right thing for our animals and the community.
- It is the ACS position that adoption into a permanent home is preferable to placing an animal with a Rescuer but NO animal will be held for potential adoption if a Rescuer is willing to take it. If an adoption opportunity presents itself before the animal is transferred to the Rescuer the adoption takes precedence.
- The ACS Rescue Coordinator may decide that placing an animal with a Rescuer is preferable to a permanent adoption, based on factors like breed characteristics or experience and it is expected that there may be a few instances where a private adopter is not allowed to adopt an animal, giving preference to the Rescuer. Preference for a permanent adoption is our standard, with few exceptions. Every animal at ACS is available for Rescue after the required legal hold time has expired.
- To eliminate mistakes and miscommunication, all communication regarding rescued animals must go through the Rescue Coordinator or in her absence, the Shelter Manager.

Certifying our Rescue Partners

- ALL Rescue partners must agree to abide by clear, basic guidelines.
- Rescuers agree that sterilizing every animal (with medical exceptions) is a key requirement.
- Rescue partners wishing to pull animals from ACS must complete an ACS application that includes standard questions on experience, housing, medical and behavioral guidelines, adoption programs and stability.

Authorized Official *GH* (initial)

Animal Care Services Policies & Directives

Division: Shelter

Effective Date: 10/01/2009

Subject: **Rescue Policy**

Revised: 8-18-09

- Certification will include a determination regarding what type and number of animals that the Rescuer may be given. It is expected that the limits on Rescuers may change as their experience and capability grows.
- Rescuers may be asked to agree to a site survey as part of this process or as part of an ACS follow up.
- At this time no fees will be charged to the Rescuer but all ACS animals will be sterilized, micro chipped, vaccinated and licensed, usually prior to leaving our shelter. It is possible that this "no charge" policy may change in the future, based on budget needs

General Guidelines

1. There are three levels of Rescue.
 - a. Level 1 is our standard rescue level and it is anticipated that most Rescuers will fall into this category. Level 1 Rescuers may have no more than 2 rescue animals assigned to them at a time. All animals given to Level 1 Rescuers MUST be spayed/neutered before the animal leaves the shelter.
 - b. Level 2 Rescuers have developed a long term relationship with ACS and will be limited to a number of animals as deemed appropriate by the screening process. Level 2 Rescuers may be given intact animals if time constraints require this.
 - c. Level 3 is reserved for Rescuers that have their 501c3 designation, have sheltering capabilities (HS, ADL etc) and an on site medical facility.
 - d. The key difference in levels is that Level 2 and Level 3 have demonstrated an ability to handle more animals and are approved to handle intact animals.
2. All ACS animals will be sterilized, micro chipped, licensed and vaccinated, as deemed appropriate by medical staff. In most cases this will be accomplished before the animal is given to Rescuers, based on health risks for surgery and time constraints to get the surgery scheduled. All microchips are to be issued by ACS.
3. ACS will try to facilitate transfer of animals to our Rescuers (when possible).
4. ACS has the final say in disposition decisions (adoption, rescue, euthanasia, return-to-owner).
5. ACS will accept the animal back from the Rescuer for any reason.
6. It is the Rescuers financial responsibility to maintain the health of the animal but ACS agrees to assist this effort as aggressively as our funding allows. It is anticipated that a special medical fund will be established from donations to ACS to offset some Rescuer medical costs. ACS will develop a procedure to assist Rescuers with medical costs, not to exceed \$500 per animal, with some consulting or services performed on a rare basis by the ACS veterinary staff. If medical costs to care for a rescued animal become more than either the Rescuer or ACS can handle ACS will accept the animal back and will make other disposition decisions as deemed appropriate, with a priority given to finding another Rescuer willing to handle the medical issues but may include euthanasia.
7. The Rescuer agrees to humanely house and care for the animal, including not making crates the primary form of housing. Crating for sleep is acceptable, but our intent is to socialize and train rescued animals so that they can become a loving part of a permanent home. Animals should not be crated

Authorized Official GH (initial)

Animal Care Services

Policies & Directives

Division: Shelter

Effective Date: 10/01/2009

Subject: **Rescue Policy**

Revised: 8-18-09

- 24/7. The Rescuer shall ensure that the animal receives exercise, enrichment, human interaction, socialization and training necessary to remedy behavior problems and mold desirable behaviors.
8. Requests for transfer of an animal species or breed for which the Rescuer is not experienced or approved will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
9. The Rescuer agrees to continually evaluate the animal's suitability for adoption and may return the animal at any time. ACS recognizes that some Rescuers may have great breed knowledge and will include this breed knowledge in all placement decisions.
10. ACS agrees to evaluate the behavior of each animal offered for placement. If ACS deems a dog is inappropriate for rescue due to behavior and the Rescuer disagrees with this decision ACS will allow an independent outside assessment to be done at the Rescuers expense and will include this information in the placement decision. The ACS decision is appealable to the director, whose decision is final.
11. The Rescuer agrees to report any bites that occur to ACS.
12. The Rescuer agrees to update all ownership/licensing information, either submitting the adoption contract by fax or mail at the time an adoption creates an ownership change. This is critical to our Return-to-Owner programs and ensures license compliance.
13. The Rescuer agrees to inform ACS of any transfer to another Rescuer or if an animal dies while in the Rescuers care. ACS may wish to confirm that medical care was being provided.
14. Failure to provide for the needs of the animal will result in ACS asking for the return of the animal and this may affect the ability of the Rescuer to receive additional animals from ACS.
15. The Rescuer agrees to euthanize or return animals that are aggressive and a danger to the public, or are in a state of suffering.
16. Rescuers must have an adoption program in place that includes an application, applicant screening (vet reference and landlord checks), and agrees not to release the animal until all checks have been made. ACS encourages a site visit but does not require this at this time.
17. The Rescuer may not transfer an animal to another group that is not an approved ACS Rescuer, without approval from ACS.

Choosing an Animal

1. ACS will issue a daily email alert, including pictures and release dates, to all Rescuers wishing to receive it, listing all animals available for rescue.
2. This alert will include all strays not eligible for release until their hold time has passed. We do this in an effort to eliminate emergencies and to allow Rescuers time to line up resources.
3. Rescuers may offer to accept an animal directly off this email list and the animal will be held for the Rescuer if possible, based on space constraints. Rescuers must make every effort to pick up the animal as soon as possible. Animals will be evaluated for placement by ACS staff and it is expected that some animals listed as STRAYS may be deemed unadoptable.
4. Most selected animals will be scheduled for surgery before being released to rescue.
5. A Rescuer may enter the shelter at any time the shelter is open to the public and can walk through public areas unescorted to select whatever animal is available, including strays that have not completed their hold times. We prefer that animals be chosen from our adoption aisle because in most cases they have already been prepared for release and can leave immediately. Animals chosen from our adoption aisle will continue to be offered for adoption at ACS until such time as the Rescuer picks the animal up.

Authorized Official GA (initial)

Animal Care Services Policies & Directives

Division: Shelter

Effective Date: 10/01/2009

Subject: **Rescue Policy**

Revised: 8-18-09

6. Rescuers can have unrestricted access to our strays, prior to the expiration of the hold time, but the animal cannot leave the facility until the hold time has expired.
7. Strays may be placed with Rescue prior to the expiration of the formal hold time based on medical necessity. The Rescuer agrees that the animal will not be permanently placed into a new home until after the hold time and will return the animal if an owner is found prior to the expiration of the hold time.
8. There may be cases of cruelty/neglect animals being placed with a Rescuer for extended time periods without transfer of ownership to the Rescuer. Final ownership determination will take place at the conclusion of any court proceeding and the determination of the courts and/or the ACS director will be final.

Found, Injured or Released RESCUED animals

There are occasions where a previously rescued animal arrives at the ACS shelter, either as a stray or as an owner release. All animals entering the shelter are required to be scanned for a microchip and if the Rescuer can be identified they will be treated as the owner. Injured Rescued animals will be treated and held for the Rescuer. Injured Rescued animals, like any animal arriving at the shelter, may be euthanized based on humane deliberation, but special consideration will be given to our Rescue partners in an attempt to get the animal back to the Rescuer. ACS will abide by the humane decisions of our shelter veterinarian regarding euthanasia.

If an "owned" animal is released to ACS we will scan the animal. If ACS can determine that the chip was implanted by a Rescuer or if we can interview the releasing owner and determine that a Rescuer was involved, we will do everything possible to contact that Rescuer to see if they wish the animal back. It is anticipated that AAPAW may at some time develop a permanent secondary person we can contact in the event we cannot track down the original rescuer. Our goal is to do everything we can to support the live release of all animals entering our shelter.

Making Us Better and Building Success

Our rules and guidelines are designed to streamline the rescue process while respecting our position as a municipal shelter tasked with both animal care and control. Suggestions for future revisions are welcome.

Authorized Official *CH* (initial)